

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Holds Hearing on Navy Posture

(NOTE: JOINED IN PROGRESS DUE TO COMMITTEE'S HEARING ROOM AUDIO)

MURTHA:

(OFF-MIKE) you're going to proceed. And I expect to overcome, or get to 313 ships.

Mr. Young?

YOUNG:

Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to forego an opening statement. But I want to tell a quick story that I think will make everybody in the room feel good.

A young soldier donated bone marrow to save the life of a patient through the bone marrow program that we created here. The soldier, after he recovered from that bone marrow extraction was deployed fairly quickly to Iraq. And he was assigned to a demolition team, to a group of Marines.

He called us the other night and said, "You know" -- he said, "I was out on patrol. We hit a really, scary, difficult situation." He said, "I have never, ever seen anybody respond as quickly, as efficiently, as effectively, as those Marines." And he said that his life's goal now is to finish out his time in the Army, and become a Marine.

But he couldn't get beyond telling us how those Marines reacted and just how great they were. So they're singing your praises, sir.

CONWAY :

Thank you, sir.

WINTER:

Chairman Murtha, Congressman Young, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am here to present the Department of the

Navy's plan to support our sailors and Marines in their mission to defend our nation against current and future challenges.

The president's fiscal year '09 budget will assist the Navy and the Marine Corps in accomplishing their complementary and reinforcing missions, while building capabilities necessary to meet future threats.

One of the primary responsibilities of our government is to provide for the nation's defense. Those responsibilities include the critical requirements to organize, train and equip our naval forces.

For the vast majority of citizens, the only cost imposed on us is financial. America is able to provide for their national defense with such a minimal impact on the citizenry, because we are blessed to have among us a generation of people, patriots all, who volunteer to serve. They are the ones who bear many hardships, accept any risks and go in harm's way.

The pay and benefit funding levels in our '09 budget request reflect the compensation levels necessary to continue to attract and retain quality personnel in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Furthermore, although we are doing well in our overall recruiting and retention numbers, I emphasize a need for special pays and bonuses to meet critical sub-specialty needs, such as our requirements for nurses, physicians and GWOT-stressed communities, such as explosive ordnance disposal personnel.

It is because of the hard work of our sailors and Marines that we are making progress fostering maritime security, defeating terrorist networks, progressing towards a stable Iraq, supporting the Afghan government, countering piracy and the proliferation of deadly technology, rendering humanitarian assistance and strengthening partnerships around the world.

Our sailors and Marines have responded when called, and superbly performed their many missions in our nation's defense. It was truly an honor and a privilege to work with them and to support them as their secretary.

The Department of the Navy's F.Y. '09 budget meets the challenge of resourcing the Navy and the Marine Corps team across a range of missions, from partnership-building to combat operations. It invests in our ability to operate, sustain and develop forces that are engaged in the global war on terror, while preparing the force for the challenges and threats of the future.

We are requesting a total of \$129 billion, a 7 percent increase over the F.Y. 2008 baseline. This increase is driven by factors such as rising oil costs and the critical comprehensive growth of the Marine Corps.

Our F.Y. 2009 budget reflects three key priorities, which are consistent with those the previous years. They are, first of all, to prevail in the global war on terror; secondly, take care of our sailors, Marines, their families and, particularly, the wounded; and lastly, prepare for future challenges across the full spectrum of operations.

To help meet our first priority, "prevail in the GWOT," we are adapting our force for current and future missions, to include growing the Marine Corps, shaping the force by recruiting and retaining the right people, and addressing critical readiness needs.

Among our most critical readiness needs is the ability to train our sailors and Marines for the threats that they may encounter. Unfortunately, our Navy has encountered increasing encroachments in our ability to conduct critical training.

We recognize that there are, on occasion, impacts on the citizenry at large, associated with such training. But these are necessary costs that are critical to the defense of our nation. We take extensive precautions to minimize the impact of our training.

We owe it to the American people, and we owe it to those who serve, to acknowledge that, as in all things in life, there are competing interests and tradeoffs, and that we treat the risks of sonar operation at sea, or the impact of jet noise, the way we treat all public-policy issues: Balancing risks and costs against legitimate national-security interests.

I commit to you today that I will continue to keep you apprised of legal challenges and their implications for readiness that we face over the course of the coming year.

Mr. Chairman, if, in the future, we are unable to properly train our sailors and Marines, we will have failed to do our duty to them and to the American people.

Another critical issue I would like to highlight concerns doing right by those who go in harm's way. As Secretary of Defense Gates has stated, "Apart from the war itself, we have no higher priority than to take care of our wounded."

Our wounded warriors and their families deserve the highest- priority care, respect and treatment for their sacrifices. Our '09 budget honors our commitment to ensure that our sailors and Marines receive the appropriate care, training and financial support that they need.

Finally, to meet the challenges of the future, the '09 budget provides for a balanced fleet of ships, aircraft and expeditionary capabilities, with the fighting power and versatility to carry out blue, green and brown water missions, wherever called upon.

Furthermore, I would like to note that, consistent with our commitment to ensure affordability and timely delivery of capabilities, we have launched an acquisition-improvement initiative to provide better integration of requirements and acquisition-decision processes, improved governance and insight into the development, establishment

and execution of acquisition programs, and formalize the framework to engage senior Naval leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for the strong support this committee and the Congress at large has given our Navy and Marine Corps teams. I want to thank you on their behalf. Our Navy and Marine Corps is a strong, capable and dedicated team. I appreciate the opportunity to represent them here today, and I look forward to your questions.

ROUGHEAD:

Senator Murtha, Congressman Young, distinguished members of the committee, on behalf of our 600,000 sailors, Navy civilians and families, (inaudible) before you today. Together with Secretary Winter and General Conway, I'm privileged to be part of the leadership team that's committed to our nation's safety, security and prosperity.

Today, your Navy stands ready with the agility, the flexibility and the confidence to do what no other Navy in the world can do. Four weeks ago, we successfully and temporarily converted a portion of our sea-based ballistic-missile defense program to engage a failing satellite. Sea-based ballistic-missile defense is here, it is real, and it works. But that is only part of what your Navy does for the nation.

We are exercising our new maritime strategy every day, a strategy that is far more than just a glossy brochure. Our carriers are projecting power in the Arabian Gulf. Our destroyers are demonstrating our resolve in the Mediterranean. An amphibious ship is engaged in piracy operations on the east coast of Africa, and another is delivering humanitarian assistance to the west coast of Africa.

Our frigates are intercepting drug traffickers in the Caribbean Sea. Our Riverine forces are patrolling vital infrastructure on the Euphrates River in Iraq, and our submarines patrol silently around the globe. We have 118 ships and over 58,000 people on deployment, out and about, doing the work of the nation. But as you so well know, our operations come at a cost to our people, our current readiness and the future fleet, and those are my three priorities.

Our people, our sailors, our Marines and their families know they have your support. We must continue to invest in their futures and in the young men and women of America who will follow in their wake.

In the context of this generational war, it is imperative that we continue to care for our wounded warriors and support the health-care needs of all of our sailors and Navy civilians. Likewise, your support for the critical-skills re-enlistment bonuses has enabled us to retain the sailors that we need.

Supporting our future force cannot be done without readiness to fight today. To this end, quality shore installations, responsive depot-level maintenance facilities and unfettered ability to train responsibly are necessities.

Where area access and shore support is denied, the commandant and I have been moving forward together with a sea-basing alternative. These elements are essential to support our fleet response plan, which has enabled us to meet requirements and will sustain us through the requested temporary carrier-force-level adjustment.

Of my three focus areas, building tomorrow's Navy to be a balanced, appropriately sized force is the most immediate, imperative and challenge. Fiscal realities, however, have led us to assume more risk in shipbuilding, ship operations and weapons.

Achieving the 113-ship floor at current funding levels will require us to improve processes, collaborate with industry and make difficult decisions in the near term. I am pleased that the first two DDG-1,000 contracts have been awarded. Our surface combatants are an essential element of our force, and it is important that we do not deplete the combatant line as we build toward 313 ships.

I remain strongly committed to funding those programs that provide critical capabilities to our forces. There is no substitute for the Littoral Combat Ship in closing the littoral-capability gap. Current F and A-18 Hornets are needed to assuage a 2,016 strike- fighter shortfall.

Surface-combatant superiority will be maintained through DDG-51 modernization. Multi-mission maritime aircraft will recapitalize our maritime patrol anti-submarine warfare capabilities. And sea-based ballistic-missile defense will ensure future theater and national defense, and enable access for our joint forces. These critical programs for our future fleet require appropriate, disciplined investment now.

The 2009 budget and its associated force-structure plans will meet our current challenges with a moderate degree of risk. Clearly, we have many challenges, of which building tomorrow's fleet is the greatest. But with these challenges, it is our opportunity to have a balanced and global fleet which will defend the nation and assure our prosperity for generations to come.

On behalf of our sailors, our Navy civilians and our families, thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear before you, and for all the support for our Navy today, and our Navy of tomorrow. I look forward to your questions.

CONWAY:

Chairman Murtha, Congressman Young and the distinguished members of the committee, I pledged to always provide you with forthright and honest assessments of

your Marine Corps, and I bear that in mind as I come to report to you on the posture, today, on our service.

In the written statement, I provided you a list of priorities that would enable your Corps to best serve our nation's security interests, both today and in the uncertain future. But in brief, our young warriors in combat are my number-one priority.

Those magnificent patriots have been extremely effective in disrupting insurgents and the Al Qaida in the Al Anbar Province. In the spirit of jointness, I must note that it's not just Marines -- rather, Marines, sailors and soldiers; a composite, over time, that has brought success in the Al Anbar.

Your Marines are still supporting the surge in Iraq, where we have already shifted from population protection to transitioning security responsibilities to Iraqi security forces, and they are actively stepping up to the task.

In answer to the most recent call from the secretary of defense, we are also deploying more than 3,400 Marines to Afghanistan. Your Marines will assist a joint force in either gaining or maintaining momentum there. We fall in on our traditional ethos of living hard and fighting well, as part of an air-ground team. This deployment will keep us at surge levels well into October.

I've just returned from a visit to Iraq and Afghanistan. And ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to report to you that your Marines are demonstrating an amazing resiliency in the face of multiple deployments to dangerous lands. In spite of one-to-one deployments of dwell regimen that has virtually no chance of getting better until the fall, the factors that we track monthly to determine the health of the force -- and those include desertion and U.A. rates, suicide, divorce, child or spousal abuse and re-enlistment rates -- are all as good or better than they were in 2001.

We do have a significant issue with our families. Simply put, they are proud of their contributions to this war, but they're tired. We owe it to those families to put our family-service programs onto a wartime footing. For too long, our programs have been borne on the backs of volunteers; perhaps, acceptable during peacetime, but untenable during a protracted conflict.

The Congress has been exceptionally supportive in enabling us to make good on promised to do more.

Of course, we look well beyond today in our obligation to the nation. And we've learned lessons of trying to build the force as we fight.

In a response to a clear need, we are growing the Corps to 202,000 Marines. We do this without lowering our standards, and we are ahead of our goals. During the last fiscal year, we needed to bring aboard 5,000 additional recruits. We actually grew 7,000 additional Marines; 96.2 percent of them, high-school graduates.

But more than just manpower, this growth requires training, infrastructure and equipment to meet the needs of our nation. You've helped us meet those requirements with steady support and encouragement. And for that, we certainly thank you.

The Marine Corps retains the mission to provide the multi-capable force for our nation -- a two-fisted fighter, if you will -- able to destroy enemy formations with our air-ground team, and a major contingency, but also able to fall back on our hard-earned, irregular warfare skills, honed over decades of conflict.

By far, the most complex of our congressionally mandated missions, amphibious operations, require deliberate training and long-term resourcing to achieve a high level of proficiency. The operational expertise, special-equipment sets and amphibious lift are not capabilities that we can rapidly provide in the face of a threat.

Finally, on behalf of your Marines, I extend great appreciation for your support this far, and I thank you in advance for those efforts, on behalf of your brave servicemen and women in harm's way. I assure you that the Marine Corps appreciates the increasing competition for the nation's discretionary resources, and will continue to provide a tangible return on every dollar spent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to comment.

MURTHA:

Well, thank you very much.

Let me start out by saying that, you know, it's one thing to talk about how we support the families. We put \$400 million -- this subcommittee did -- last year. The Defense Department cut that back to \$240 million. I mean, that doesn't look like it's supporting the families the way we think it should be supported.

They have inadequate facilities in many places. They have inadequate counseling in many places.

We do the best we can. Between this subcommittee and the members of this subcommittee, we try to make sure -- we know how important the families are to the members, themselves, that are serving overseas. It is discouraging when the Iraqis aren't stepping up to put their money in, the Europeans are not stepping up, putting their money in, and the United States taxpayers keep putting more money into these -- \$343 million a day.

But infrastructure is something that -- we're going to try to do a little bit more for medical infrastructure this year. We're going to transfer money to the Military Construction Subcommittee; also, for just regular infrastructure.

But the shortages that we see, and that you're talking about, have to be taken care of. And we hope we'll be able to get started in that direction this year.

We see a change in direction. We want to look past Iraq, into the future, because there's nobody more than the Navy that prevents a war. You can deploy quickly. You can deploy to an area where they understand the might and the military impact of the United States. And, with the equipment to shape this in, it's going to be more difficult.

For instance, I don't even need to ask you if we can get to 313 ships, at the numbers that the administration is sending over, because it can't be done. And so we're going to add some ships -- or, at least, I'm going to recommend to the subcommittee we add some ships to what you folks have been able to -- what OMB has been able to let you recommend to the committee.

But let me ask you a question, Commandant. How long does it take you to train somebody for amphibious warfare? What would you say, if you stop training from the current-type training you're doing, and you start training for amphibious warfare -- the conventional-type operations?

CONWAY:

Sir, the issue is training, certainly. But the larger issue is trainers.

For years, in my coming up through the Corps, we always had this cadre of people who were very well experienced in amphibious operations; kind of the old hands, who had been ship's company, and had done multiple operations or exercises. Those folks are steadily leaving us. And we're not creating that cadre of trainers behind them. So that's my larger concern.

Now, it's been four years now since we have done major amphibious exercises. I think it will be at least four years before we can gain back some of that level of expertise and get to a level of comfort, to the point where that, once again, becomes a Corps competency. And I may be optimistic thinking that it's a one-for-one exchange. It may be worse than that.

MURTHA:

Well, this is a problem that we have when we're training for this type of warfare, and yet looking ahead, trying to get past it.

So one of the things I worry about -- repairing the equipment. And nobody's done more than this committee, trying to put in enough money for reset and rehabilitation. Well, I'm looking ahead. I'm thinking to myself, "If we don't start buying new equipment,

if we don't start getting past this and buying the new equipment, we'll never get to the point where we need to get -- where we have less maintenance costs, less fuel costs."

Now, the Army came to this committee about the FCS. Well, I've always been worried about FCS, because it's \$160 billion. And I don't see how we ever get there. Well, they're trying to come up with a way they can cut back some of the reset and get to the newer equipment, which reduces maintenance costs, reduces fuel costs.

One of the proposals we have had is, "Jump right over the destroyers and go to the cruisers," which would be nuclear power. Yet, it's impossible to get there, from what I understand, just because of the ship -- the need to have an industrial base, the fact we wouldn't have any ships in some of the shipyards.

Is that a possibility at all?

WINTER (?):

Mr. Chairman, there are several aspects associated with the ongoing DDG-1,000 program.

First of all, it is a very different ship than what we envisioned for the cruiser. It is one mechanism of providing naval surface-fire support to the Marines. And it is an ongoing activity that is very, I think, well-planned and well-established, and critical to maintain in terms of ensuring that the industrial base is able to continue to evolve.

At the same time, we need to make sure that we set the right groundwork for the cruiser development in the future. We're still going through the analysis of alternatives associated with the CGX program.

I think the process is a good one. I think the right questions are being asked. But we also need to make sure that we take the time to answer those questions, before we just run into the development of that program, sir.

MURTHA:

I hear two stories: One, that a nuclear-powered cruiser will save us a lot of money in fuel costs. And yet, the up-front costs are so much, it will take 25 or 30 years to make up for that initial cost. Is that accurate?

WINTER (?):

Well, sir, I think there is still a question as to what the break-even point would be. That's highly dependent on the cost of oil. And numbers have been bandied about of

everything from \$100-a-barrel oil, which is basically where we are right now, to \$300- a-barrel-oil, depending upon what you see as the future. And I can get estimates all over the map. Depending on who I talk to, you'll get different break-even points.

The other issue is that, in the commercial world, I could go out -- my old life -- and borrow money to be able to accommodate a cost- savings in the future. We can't quite do that here. And so the additional costs associated with nuclear power for any of our surface combatants would come at the expense of other top line.

One other point I would make is that we know how to deal with nuclear power. We've got a tremendous track record. And, in fact, at this point in time, roughly half of the reactors operational in the United States are operated by the Navy.

At the same time, I will tell you it takes awhile to configure a reactor plant for a vessel, and it does provide some significant constraints. It's a lot easier to put a nuclear reactor in a large ship like a carrier, than it is to be able to do it in a more volumetrically challenged vessel like a destroyer or a cruiser.

MURTHA:

Mr. Young?

YOUNG:

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Chairman Murtha, made in his statement -- and one of his questions emphasized the importance of the Navy. And there's no doubt the importance of the Navy not only to -- Navy and the sailors, but the Marines onboard the ships. But the mission of those ships is extremely important, but particularly those ships, so they can perform the mission of protecting the crews onboard the ships -- is important -- brings me to the subject of training.

We have seen time -- and recent times -- where we lost the training areas at Vieques, for example. We've lost bombing ranges for one reason or another. And now we are about to lose training areas for sonar; sonar, which is very, very important to protecting the ships to do their mission and to protect the troops onboard.

You had an appeal to the federal appeals court recently. Your appeal was rejected. I assume that you're not going to give up without a little more of a fight, considering the importance of sonar training to the protection of our Navy.

WINTER:

Sir, I fully anticipate that we will be submitting a brief shortly for the Supreme Court to appeal the matter at hand, associated with this Southern California operating area.

YOUNG:

Who will handle that? Will the Navy handle that, or will the executive branch ...

WINTER:

The Department of Justice has the official responsibility for the (inaudible) matters. We have a dedicated team within the Department of Navy, within the General Counsel Office, supported by the JAG Corps and the operational Navy staff, providing the technical support to that activity.

YOUNG:

Mr. Secretary, what will be the impact if you lose that appeal?

WINTER:

I think that the impact could be very significant in terms of providing a series of constraints on our ability to train.

Sonar is -- I believe you know, and I'd like to make sure everyone else does understand -- is a phenomenology that interacts, if you will, with the environment. Sonar operation depends upon where you are, what the water column looks like, what the sea bed looks like. And training of the fleet needs to occur in areas that mimic, if you will, the operating areas that we expect to be encountering in the future.

Without the ability to fully engage in that training, I think we would be hard-pressed to argue that our fleet was prepared to deal with the future threat. I would also note that the training activities that we engage in take place over extended periods of time. It's not just a matter of turning on a sonar or getting a quick reading, and deciding that you've got -- something worked.

The engagement between the submarine force and the surface force that is trying to deal with it takes place over a long period of time. The interruption of that training, even if a whale or other marine mammal is seen at a great distance, can have a significant impact on the integrity of that training exercise.

And so we have a lot of concerns. We believe we've put forth a very good program right now. We have a series of 29 mitigation measures that we have operationally employed, now, for several years. And these measures call for surveillance of the test area, continuing observation, looking for marine mammals, and a very studied approach of reducing power and, if necessary, turning off the exercise if a marine mammal gets too close.

That approach, that set of mitigation measures, has proven to be very effective. And we have not had a single documented case of injury or death to a marine mammal since those measures have been put into place.

To further build upon those and to keep on constraining the test regime further and further, which seems to be an approach desired by some out there, I think, would hurt us significantly. And I'd ask CNO to comment.

ROUGHEAD:

The challenges that are being posed by new designs of submarines are significant. They are becoming quieter. They're getting smaller. They do not have to come up and recharge their batteries as often as submarines in the past have had to do. They are difficult targets.

And they're also proliferating at a significant rate. We estimate that in the next two decades, the submarine inventory in the world will increase by 50 percent. And that poses a challenge to the sea lanes of the world.

We must be able to practice. We must be able to train. But we also have to be able to train in those areas that allow us to not only practice our anti-submarine warfare skill -- because an adversary is going to throw everything they can at us.

They're going to throw their submarines at us. They're going to attack us with cruise missiles, with airplanes, with other ships. And that's why we have to be in areas where we can bring all of those types of challenges to our sailors, so that they know what it's going to be like, and that they're properly prepared; that they know how to use their equipment; and that they're going to win.

YOUNG:

Recently, Captain McCardy (ph) took me to visit where you train sea mammals to do some pretty exciting and pretty important missions for the Navy. And some of the scientists that we met with there, I asked the question, "What is the effect of sonar on the whales or the other sea mammals?"

Their response -- and they seemed to be in agreement -- was that if it's uncomfortable for the whale to be in the area where the sonar is being exercised, he leaves. And that seemed like a pretty simple answer to me. And, you know, these were scientists. I assume that they know what they're talking about.

But I certainly hope that you succeed, and that we're not denied the -- because the admiral just mentioned how serious this threat could be. And we all know about the Chinese submarine that recently trailed some of our Navy vessels undetected.

So I hope that you are successful in that appeal to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the gentleman a question about the Afghanistan deployment -- NATO has said that we need about 7,000 additional troops in NATO. You're going to send 3,200 Marines, which is going to, according to your own statement, stretch you really thin.

What do we know about whether or not NATO is going to actually step up and provide the additional 3,500 to 4,000 additional troops that we feel that we need there?

CONWAY:

Sir, I can only say that it's my perspective that that's not a closed chapter yet.

I know that the secretary and the chairman attend frequent quarterly discussions with our NATO partners and allies. And it's the topic, virtually, on every occasion.

So they continue to encourage them. If they can't provide maneuver battalions, provide police trainers or provide PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Team) or provide soft kinds of power that the Afghan government needs to become more effective in what it does for the people.

So if they continue to pound that drum, sir, I think I can fairly well assure you.

YOUNG:

Well, it seems like NATO is not really stepping up, as they should. And, hopefully, we can find some way to impress upon them the importance of not being undermanned there, so that we can have a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, sir.

MURTHA:

One of the things I just want you to send for the record -- I want to know what a C.R. would mean to you, because I'm not sure we're going to have a bill this year, just because of the problems that we have in both bodies. So send me a document that shows what would happen if we had a C.R., rather than a base bill this year.

We'll have an '08 supplemental. But I'm not sure we'll have anything but a C.R. to get us through the rest of the year.

Second is, I'd like to have the number of contractors that the Navy has by category. I need to know whether the security people, whether their service people, the foreign nationals and so forth -- the Army is going to send me the same kind of a list.

So I'd appreciate it if you would send us that list so we can find out where -- I was disappointed to hear that the secretary of the Army had 190,000 contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I asked him to categorize that so we could see exactly what he's talking about.

I know we need contractors, but, you know -- you have something?

CONWAY:

Sir, just as a point of clarification, if I could ask -- you're talking about contractors in theater?

MURTHA:

In theater, yes.

CONWAY :

In theater -- thank you, sir. I'd be happy to provide that.

MURTHA:

Mr. Moran?

MORAN:

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a provocative question, there.

I've got a couple of questions, but first I want to make a little observation, particularly to you, General Conway.

So my nephew, Kevin, pulls a Jack Murtha, and he drops out of college so he can join the Marines, so he can fight in Iraq. So he finishes up Paris Island, and he's all set -- you know, he's a football-player type guy. He's really gung ho. And the Marine Corps says, "Sorry. You have to go into financial-management training. We need all you smart guys to be going into financial management."

He says, "Financial Management? I want to go fight in Iraq." He says, "Why financial management?" And they said, "Well, the Congress is saying that we don't have enough control over our spending, so we need to get more people in financial management." So I blamed it on Norm Dicks.

I do want to ask you all about recruiting and retention, because there aren't a lot of Jack Murthas around, frankly. And as a result, you're having to spend about \$300 million on bonuses; \$60,000 for specialty needs. How are you doing on meeting those specialty occupational categories that you so desperately need?

CONWAY:

We're doing very well. We've been very pleased with our ability. At a time in the country where the propensity on part of all three ethnic groups is not to join the military, we've been pleased with the ability of our recruiters to get out and get into the schools, and bring in the numbers that we need.

As I mentioned in the opening statement, we thought we could keep the standards high and do about 5,000 a year. After adding about 300 recruiters to the field, and some use of bonuses, but not large numbers of bonuses, let's say, for enlistment -- we apply bonuses, more, for re-enlistment, really, than we do for an initial entry. We've been able to manage all the fields, sir, pretty effectively.

And to your sort of vignette, sir -- our recruiters tell us if they had all just infantry MOSs, they could close out by about the 10th of every month. That's the thread of great, young Americans out there that want to fight for their country, if that's what the country is doing.

We have a program, by the way, that tries to get every Marine to the fight. So if your nephew will be patient with us, there's every possibility, or maybe probability, we'll get him where he wants to go.

MURTHA (?):

Would the gentleman yield?

MORAN:

Yes, Senator.

MURTHA:

Can you do without these bonuses?

Now, I joined. My three brothers joined. My dad and his brothers joined. Can we do without these bonuses? Can't we just rely on patriotism to get these guys in?

CONWAY:

Sir, if I had to ship right out to the service -- but I don't like to do that, because there's, I think, a necessary reflection -- that's what we do. We don't offer a \$40,000 college loan or a small-business loan when you get out.

The bonus that an average Marine takes is probably on the order of \$3,000 to \$5,000. And what we sell is the fact that you're going to be a United States Marine, you're going to fight for your country and you're going to be a Marine for life.

MORAN:

Mr. Chairman, Kevin didn't get a penny. And he doesn't know of any -- it's put a toll on (inaudible). His father could have used it.

OK. Now, let me get -- I got another question here. And this is a little or more serious. We're going to ask Secretary Winter about the Joint Strike Fighter.

The investment now approaches about \$1 trillion -- awful lot of planes. And we're told that the total acquisition costs increased by more than \$23 billion because of higher procurement costs. The GAO states that the \$288 billion for acquisition is unreliable because it's insufficiently documented.

And then the GAO found that three independent defense officers separately concluded that program-cost estimates are understated by as much as \$38 billion, and that the schedule is likely (ph) to slip from at least a year to more than two years.

You know, if we're spending nearly \$1 trillion on the development and procurement of an aircraft, we've got to make sure that it meets our needs. And you really have to wonder, what is such a substantial challenge that's going to face us in the near future, for

dominance of the air space? We've got it nobody has any interest in trying to contest us for dominance of the air space.

And GAO tells us that 90 percent of the acquisition program is still ahead of us. I mean, we're talking about an enormous amount of money. Why do we need to be investing so much in an aircraft that really seems to be more about winning the last war, the Cold War, than dealing with the current threats to America's security by people and groups that are never going to have any jet fighters, even bombers, to contest air sovereignty?

Do you want to handle that?

WINTER:

I'll take a crack at it, Congressman.

First of all, I'll suggest that the JSF program, the F-35 program, is designed to provide us with a broad spectrum of air- support capabilities that deal with the current engagement, as well as any of the engagements that we're looking at in the future.

The value of tactical air is something that's been proven time and time again. And, for the most part, it relates to being able to control the air, but also to be able to project power from the air to the ground, in support of ground forces or naval forces that are within the area of responsibility.

JSF is an overweight (ph) program, if you will, that has three separate components. It supports the STOVL, the short takeoff and vertical landing capability, that is critical to the Marine Corps.

Right now, for our big deck amphib, we really only have one class of aircraft that is capable of flying off of them. That's the Harrier. That is a very old aircraft. It is in great need of replacement. And it is the core of our ability to provide support to our embarked Marines and any future amphibious operation that they engage in.

Similarly, the future for the Navy -- the carrier variant -- is the mechanism of providing future capabilities that will span the spectrum of threats that we have to deal with for naval aviation to be able to project power from the sea or to be able to deal with threats at the sea.

A lot of the program is still ahead of us because we're still in the process of development. We have established a program here of "Fly before you buy." We are going through a detailed evaluation and development activity to ensure that we have what we need.

We're not going to place orders for any of these aircraft for production purposes, until such time as we've had adequate flight-test evaluation. That's coming up here very shortly. We expect to see the STOVL first flight coming up here this year, later this year. And I think that that will be a good milestone, at which point we'll be able to evaluate where we are in terms of the overall development process, and where we think we will be in terms of the future cost estimates.

MORAN:

It's a great answer. And that's what you're supposed to tell us. But, you know, the Navy and Marine Corps are absolutely essential -- are always going to be absolutely essential. But we're getting to the point where this is kind of a zero-sum game.

If you put \$1 trillion into the J-35, you're taking it from someplace else. And I really question if 2,500 jet fighters and \$1 trillion is the best possible use of an enormous amount of resources that might otherwise go into other needs to address the real current kind of threat we face. But that's just a comment. And I appreciate the answer.

There's nothing wrong with the answer, but I'm not sure there isn't something wrong with some of the policy.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, good morning. Thank you for your service and those you look after in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world; and, certainly, to those who serve in the Navy, doing, in their military occupations, things they weren't trained to do, specifically - you know, guarding those convoys and, at times, probably prisoners; all sorts of things that are pretty key and important to us.

One of the ways to discuss posture, which is sort of the focus of this hearing, is to talk about what other nations are doing. And I think, quite a lot, we focus on the buildup of what's happening in China. I think, maybe, less attention is focused on Russia.

You're familiar, Admiral, with, you know, the incident in late 2006, of the Chinese navy, apparently, stalking the Kitty Hawk and putting our submarine within firing distance, without, supposedly, being detected. I assume that sub was a diesel. Do they have nuclear subs?

ROUGHEAD (?):

Yes, sir, they do. But in this instance, it was a diesel submarine.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

So it was a diesel sub.

And then we read, last November, of a Chinese submarine tracking the Kitty Hawk on the Taiwan Strait. It was monitored by an anti- submarine aircraft watching the sub. And, of course, it was described in the paper, as I quote, "The first direct military confrontation between the two nations' naval forces since 1996."

Besides the obvious buildup -- concern about the obvious buildup of Chinese forces -- what can you tell us about these incidents as they relate to the -- sort of the tactics and strategies that you're looking at? How do we posture ourselves, given these and other types of incidents?

ROUGHEAD (?):

Yes, sir.

And I was a Pacific fleet commander at the time. And on the last incident that you mentioned, I question the credibility of that news report. But what we have done in recent years is we've looked at the posture that we must have, particularly in the Pacific, because the Pacific is a very important region for us from a security standpoint, the allies that we have there, but also economically. And it contributes directly to our prosperity.

We've shifted our carrier force so that, now, we're biased more toward the Pacific. We've done the same thing with our submarines. We've forward home-ported some of our submarines in Guam so that we have more presence, greater response, in the Pacific area.

We continue to exercise with our allies and partners in that region. And anti-submarine warfare is extremely important. That's why the training is so important. But it's also key to recall that, in some cases, countries are able to export some of these systems.

And so to simply look at one particular flag, and see that as a potential threat, I think, has to be broadened out -- and where are some of these systems -- advanced systems -- finding their way? And that's important to do as well.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

But, you know, by all reports -- you know, obviously, we've repositioned ourselves, but, you know, I assume some people must be alarmed by the talk of the Chinese, you know, producing, you know, a goal of 200 submarines. I'm not sure what the figure was in terms of surface vessels. And they do a pretty good job with their decological (ph)

development. And what they don't get there, I assume, they steal from us or get from other sources.

Are you concerned? I mean, in terms of sort of sounding the alarm here -- you know, while we talk about the size of the fleet. And we know how expensive it is to bring new ships on line. Are you concerned about their buildup?

I know we always go with the old issue of, you know, overwhelming force. And we are, you know -- our capabilities are better. But the Chinese are no slouches. And, you know, there's often a talk of, you know, 2015. But, Chinese aren't waiting to 2015.

How do you gauge where the Chinese are going, and how closely are we keeping an eye on their development of new technology, as well as the vehicles that carry them?

ROUGHEAD (?):

Well, we watch naval developments around the world. And, clearly, China is the navy that is increasing in capability and capacity faster than any other Navy on the globe.

There is no question in my mind -- and I've had the opportunity to meet with their leadership, with my counterpart, on a couple of occasions -- that there is no question that they are developing what we refer to as a "blue-water navy," a navy that can range farther from their shores.

They also have a much longer view than others have. Their objective is to become a significant regional navy. There is no question that the issue of Taiwan is always first and foremost in their mind. But as you look at the development of the navy, it's also a navy that's focused on the sea lanes of communication, and being able to assure the flows that fuel their growing economy. So they're doing that.

But in addition to the hardware, it's also important that we look at people. And one of my first contacts with the PLA navy -- the leadership tended to have gotten into their positions through political means. The leadership in the PLA navy today came up through operational paths.

They understand what it is like to operate a navy at sea, and they see this vision of their navy as a significant regional navy and, I believe, expanding out and becoming global, as time goes on.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

The view is, at least from my reading, is that they're what may have been described as somewhat political -- you'd never call it amateurish -- is that they're doing -- you know,

they're sort of concentrating their development of their military in a very highly professional manner.

I mean, it may not be mirroring our special forces or your Seals, but in reality, they are emulating the best of what's out there. And we need to be prepared for it.

Just on one system here -- could you comment about the drone combat squadron who was -- the whole issue of -- you're seeking, I think, a competitive prototyping in preparation of fielding a first squadron of unmanned combat aerial vehicles. Are those carrier-based?

ROUGHEAD (?):

Yes, sir. That's part of a -- kind of what I would call a "family of unmanned vehicles," beginning with ...

FRELINGHUYSEN:

You have things going off carriers now which are unmanned?

ROUGHEAD (?):

No, sir. We are not flying unmanned vehicles off of our carriers.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

You're not?

ROUGHEAD (?):

We are flying unmanned vehicles off some of our other ships. But the article that you reference is moving to an air- combat vehicle, one that can provide striking power off the carriers. And it's part of a stepped and phased development.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

That's, in some ways, pretty revolutionary, given the fact that -- you know, obviously, the whole issue of man behind the controls -- not that there aren't men behind these controls. But one could view that as somewhat of a major departure.

ROUGHEAD (?):

Well, I think, sir, the ...

FRELINGHUYSEN:

Perhaps, a positive departure.

ROUGHEAD (?):

The significant thing is being able to operate those combat airplanes off of an aircraft carrier in an unmanned way.

Our other unmanned programs address other needs that we have in maritime surveillance. But this is something that is fully complex. Landing on an aircraft carrier and taking off can get pretty sporty. And we've never done it with an unmanned vehicle before. So that's why we're -- it has a little longer view than some of the other unmanned programs that we have.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

OK.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MURTHA:

Mr. Frelinghuysen, did you get that bonus when you went into the Army?

FRELINGHUYSEN:

I sure didn't.

MURTHA:

Look where he's ended up, huh?

(UNKNOWN)

That's a random sample.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

I'm glad you're leaving.

MURTHA:

Ms. Kaptur?

KAPTUR:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. Thank you for coming today.

Admiral Roughead, I'd like to ask you a question about the structure of the Chinese shipbuilding industry.

To what extent does the government of China subsidize the manufacture and construction of ships there? Have you looked at that issue?

ROUGHEAD:

I've not done the economic analysis, but my sense is it's heavily subsidized. And ...

KAPTUR:

Right. Is it really not an arm of the state, and of their government?

ROUGHEAD:

I would say that they are state industries, with a view of becoming a dominant shipbuilding industry in the world.

KAPTUR:

I agree with that. And the question I have, coming from a maritime community that has suffered greatly over the years with the loss of both hardware, as well as the people

who make the ships -- although we're not a deep-water port -- what do we do, in your budget, to capture every single dollar we can, knowing they're the primary producers in the world today? Correct?

The work that was being done in Korea is now moving up to China. I think if you look at the shifting nature of shipbuilding in the world, what do we do with your budget and every element of it -- the leasing you're now doing, spacing that out -- how can we possibly compete with these private companies in our country, against a subsidized industry like that?

How do we use your budget to restore shipbuilding capacity in this country and all the componentry that goes into it? How do we do that?

ROUGHEAD:

Yes, ma'am.

I would say that my focus is on building warships, and that the quality, the sophistication of the ships we build, is unmatched by any nation in the world. But it's important that we get to the capacity issue. And that's why getting to the 313-ship fleet is so important to me, as a CNO.

KAPTUR:

But you also have many smaller vessels, Admiral. You have vessels that carry ammunition. And you are leasing those vessels now. They're not really. They weren't built here.

And I don't see the department is fully conscious of the threat that's out there, particularly from China, and using every tool we have in order to restore our waning capability on the seas, for all types of vessels.

ROUGHEAD:

Mr. Secretary, do you want to take that?

WINTER:

Yes, let me ...

ROUGHEAD:

OK.

WINTER:

... if I could, ma'am.

First of all, in terms of the leased vessels, we're reducing our dependency on those leased vessels. We're down from 22 leased vessels -- down to 17 at this point in time. These are short-term leases, under five years, and they really represent an opportunity, if you will, to surge, and to be able to bring into support roles, vessels that are not currently being manufactured, and for which we do not have a good economic argument for manufacturing and full-time ownership of.

We are putting a lot of effort into investing in those capabilities that provide the U.S. shipbuilding industry with the ability to produce ships at lower cost. And this comes by way of everything from contractual arrangements with the individual yards to install a lot of technology, which is available elsewhere outside the United States for the most part. That does assist us in terms of our surface combatants.

And in cases where that technology can be applied to yards that support multiple applications -- and, unfortunately, there's only one of those yards right now -- major yards -- that's the NASSCO facility in San Diego, which builds both Jones Act ships, as well as logistic- support ships for us.

There is value that they are able to accrue, both to their commercial endeavors, as well as to their activities for the Navy.

KAPTUR:

Well, Mr. Secretary, do you monitor where the subcontracts go? For example, if a ship is taken to China and the front half is whacked off and something is welded on the back, do you monitor your subcontracts to do everything possible to make sure that's done in this country, rather than shipped somewhere else?

WINTER:

Let's see -- On all of our ships, most definitely, ma'am.

KAPTUR:

What about the electronics?

WINTER:

The electronics, it's the same thing. All of the modifications to our ships are done. They're all managed and appropriately assessed by the Navy organizations that have the responsibility for all management ...

(CROSSTALK)

KAPTUR:

Are they made in this country, sir? Are they made in this country?

WINTER:

Every ship in the Navy register, all of our combatants, are.

KAPTUR:

All of the vessels under your command are made in this country, every single component?

WINTER:

Outside, not every single component, ma'am. But the vast majority of them are. The vast majority of the components ...

(CROSSTALK)

KAPTUR:

Well, I would appreciate a letter from your department that summarizes for me where you think the challenges are to retain that production capacity in this country.

WINTER:

I'd be pleased to do that, ma'am.

KAPTUR:

All right.

I wanted to ask General Conway -- thank you very, very much for your service.

What percent of the Marines under your command are serving a third tour or more in combat in Iraq? Do you know that number?

CONWAY:

No, ma'am, I don't. I take surveys every time I hold a town hall. And of the audiences there, routinely, 60 percent to 70 percent will have deployed. I'll ask for a second and a third time, or even a fourth time and a fifth time, now, for a show of hand.

So I would say, increasingly, we have three-time deployers. But I'd have to get the exact percentage for you if you want that precisely here.

KAPTUR:

I would be very interested -- and in the trend, General. I'm very interested in the trend -- if that is increasing -- which I think it is.

CONWAY:

One thing, ma'am, I would explain to you is that, unlike the other services, we will serve about a three-year tour in the operational forces. And then, we will have our Marines and our officers go to what we call a "B-billet." And they will be there for about three years. And then they'll come back to the operating forces.

So we don't have some of the people that spend seven, eight, nine years in the operating forces, consecutively, to roll up some of these large numbers. Now, some of those folks are starting to come back because we've been at this so long.

This summer, we're going to see some people come back, I think, that, maybe, left the operating forces in '04, '05, and we'll have to see what the impact is on that, for our retention.

KAPTUR:

Mr. Chairman, my time is probably expired, but I did want to ask the general if he could ...

MURTHA:

End this before the votes, because there's a series of votes (OFF-MIKE).

KAPTUR:

All right. Could I just ask the general to provide, for the record, Mr. Chairman -- the issue of urban-warfare training in U.S. cities by the Marine reserves -- is an issue that has hit our community directly, and it was very troublesome what happened.

I'd like to know from you whether this is happening in active forces anywhere in our country -- if urban-warfare training is occurring in U.S. cities, and what are the conditions for that, or whether it is just happening in the reserves side.

CONWAY:

No, ma'am. It happens with the active forces. It's been happening since the mid-1980s, almost without interruption or without any incidents. So I was a little bit surprised to see the one happen as it did in Ohio.

KAPTUR:

Thank you.

MURTHA:

Mr. Rothman?

ROTHMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your very distinguished service to our country.

The Marine Corps has many officers who have never been deployed on a Navy ship, I've been told. Is that true?

CONWAY :

Increasingly, sir, that is true.

ROTHMAN:

Does that disturb you?

CONWAY :

Immensely.

ROTHMAN:

And with regards to that issue, as well as the lack of training for amphibious landings, does this new budget address that, and if so, how?

CONWAY :

Sir, it does indirectly. And it transcends just amphibious operations. We're not doing live-fire maneuver exercises anymore. We're not going to cold-weather training. We're not doing jungle training. The part of the budget that assists us in managing that and making it better is in growing the force.

There are two reasons we wanted to grow the Marine Corps. One was to be able to facilitate our deployment to dwell. Second was to be able to provide relief in the process, so we could spend more time with the families and more time doing training.

So if we can get ...

ROTHMAN:

And training for these other things?

CONWAY:

Yes, sir, exactly.

ROTHMAN:

OK.

CONWAY:

If we can get this deployment to dwell, something more akin to seven months deployed, 14 months home, we can sustain that, we think. We can do the training. We think the families will be much happier.

ROTHMAN:

Very good. I only have a few minutes.

There's this new issue of Foreign Policy Magazine --**March**/April 2008 issue. It contains a survey which was conducted jointly with the Center for a New American Security.

But it asked 3,400 officers holding the rank of major or lieutenant commander and above, across all those services, active duty and retired, general officers and field-grade officers, about their views of the health of the military.

And here are some troubling findings. They say that 60 percent see the U.S. military as weaker today than it was five years ago -- 60 percent. And with regards to the Marine Corps, in particular, the majority of the responses indicated that, on a scale of one to 10, one being no concern about readiness and effectiveness, and 10 being extreme concern, the majority of the responses indicated a seven, indicating great concern about the health of the Marine Corps.

Would any of you gentlemen wish to address this?

CONWAY :

Well, since you left off with the Marine Corps, sir, I'll start and say that I think I would probably be in there about a six or a seven myself.

Now, in terms of the capability of the force, we are much more capable then we were five years ago. We have more Marines. We have more equipment. We have combat training. And I'd be much more comfortable sending that force into a fight, than I was leading the force into the fight in '03.

But the concern that these people, I think, are representing, is that our core competencies, which go well beyond counter insurgency, are not being trained to -- not being conducted these days -- to make sure that we can go anywhere and do anything for this country.

ROTHMAN:

And that will be addressed to your satisfaction in your budget?

CONWAY:

Sir, the budget will help. But what we actually need, over time, will be, again, more time spent at home.

You can do that through growing the force. You can do that through reducing the requirement.

ROTHMAN:

Right.

CONWAY:

If the requirement is reduced and we're able to manage these deployment requirements more effectively, with a larger force, then we'll be back to doing those things, and we'll be in much better shape as a result.

ROTHMAN:

And so CNO -- with regards to China -- two questions. One was -- if I wrote this down correctly -- you questioned the credibility of the news report that -- now, I'm a lawyer, by training. Are you refusing the accuracy of the news report?

ROUGHEAD (?):

The reference to the encounter in the Straits of Taiwan, I would refute that.

ROTHMAN:

OK.

And with regards to the buildup of the Chinese submarine force, it seems like a considerable effort on their part. And I heard what you said, that this was their effort to

protect their energy supplies, and they expect to be -- they're doing this to be a regional power.

But you did say, "with the probability that the wish to become a global sea power," as well. Does your budget that you're submitting to us address the challenges of this growing submarine fleet from the Chinese?

ROUGHEAD (?):

Our budget, sir, represents the balance that we must have in the fleet. And the capabilities that we have -- it does address our ability to operate as a global navy and prevail.

ROTHMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MURTHA:

Thank you very much.

(OFF-MIKE) it is hard for me to believe that you're a six or a seven, Commandant. Huh? You're not out working this. You're not working out, huh?

The committee adjourns until 1:30.

CQ Transcriptions, [≤March≤](#) [≤13](#), 2008

List of Panel Members and Witnesses

PANEL MEMBERS:

REP. JOHN P. MURTHA, D-PA. CHAIRMAN

REP. NORM DICKS, D-WASH.

REP. PETER J. VISCLOSKY, D-IND.

REP. JAMES P. MORAN, D-VA.

REP. MARCY KAPTUR, D-OHIO

REP. ROBERT E. "BUD" CRAMER, D-ALA.

REP. ALLEN BOYD, D-FLA.

REP. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN, D-N.J.

REP. SANFORD D. BISHOP JR., D-GA.

REP. DAVID R. OBEY, D-WIS. EX OFFICIO

REP. C.W. BILL YOUNG, R-FLA. RANKING MEMBER

REP. DAVID L. HOBSON, R-OHIO

REP. RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN, R-N.J.

REP. TODD TIAHRT, R-KAN.

REP. JACK KINGSTON, R-GA.

REP. JERRY LEWIS, R-CALIF. EX OFFICIO

WITNESSES:

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY DONALD C. WINTER

ADMIRAL GARY ROUGHEAD (USN), CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

GENERAL JAMES T. CONWAY (USMC), COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE
CORPS